

ued to be very active in the community and in veterans and international affairs. Davis helped develop the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs at the Georgia Institute of Technology, served as chairman for the Korean War Veterans Memorial Advisory Board, and later as general chairman for the Korean War Veterans Memorial Dedication that took place in July, 1995.

**Brigadier Gen. Joseph J. Foss  
(1915-2003)**

Retired Brig. Gen. Joseph J. Foss, a two-term governor of South Dakota and a Medal Of Honor recipient for his actions as a Marine Corps fighter pilot in World War II, died at age 87 in an hospital in Arizona Jan. 1, after failing to regain consciousness an aneurysm in October 2002.

Flying a Grumman Wildcat, Brig. Gen. Foss, then Capt. Foss, shot down 26 Japanese fighters and bombers in the battle for Guadalcanal from October 1942 to January 1943, becoming the first American pilot of World War II to equal Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker's record from World War I.

Foss went up in a plane for the first time as a 16-year-old boy in a \$1.50 sight-seeing ride in a Ford Tri-Motor. He was convinced that the aviator's life was for him when he watched a Marine Corps aerial team perform numerous aerobatic stunts in open-cockpit biplanes. Foss graduated from the University of South Dakota at age 25, then joined the Marine Corps and earned his wings in March 1941, nine months before

America entered the war.

Foss and his group of fliers known as "Joe's Flying Circus" played a major role in defending Guadalcanal.

A large group of Japanese fighters and bombers approached Guadalcanal in an attempt to destroy the airstrip. Foss and his 11 pilots went to engage them. However, they soon realized that the Japanese fighters were trying to lure them into a confrontation so the bombers could slip through. Instead of attacking the fighters, the pilots maneuvered nearby without firing. The Japanese began to run out of fuel, and, fearing that Capt. Foss' group was a decoy for other Americans hidden in the clouds, they retreated, leaving Henderson Field unscathed. It never came under a sustained attack again.

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt presented Foss with the Medal of Honor May 18, 1943, along with Silver Star, Bronze Star and Purple Heart. Foss was even featured on the cover of the June 7, 1943 issue of Life Magazine, described as "America's No. 1 Ace."

After the War, Foss helped organize, and was commissioned in the South Dakota Air National Guard. After turning to politics, he was elected to the South Dakota House of Representatives. In the Korean War, he returned to active duty as an Air Guard Colonel, and later attained the rank of Brigadier General. In 1954, Foss was overwhelmingly elected Governor of South Dakota, where he served two terms. He went

on to be elected the first commissioner of the American Football League and served until 1996. He also was president of the National Rifle Association (NRA) from 1998 - 1990.

**Captain Ted Williams (1918-2002)**

Ted Williams, a Marine war hero and Boston Red Sox legend, died of a heart attack July 5, 2002 at the age of 83.

Williams flew a total of 39 combat missions during the Korean War. Even though he missed all or part of five seasons with the Red Sox due to his duty as a pilot, he still found time to play the game he loved.

The "Splendid Splinter's" military career began in World War II after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. He voluntarily enlisted in the Navy in 1942, and was called into active duty in November of that year.

The Hall of Famer missed the next three baseball seasons with the Boston Red Sox, spending his time studying and learning how to fly at Navy flight school in Jacksonville, Fla. There, he set the new student gunnery record flying the F4U Corsair, having the highest marks in reflexes, coordination and visual reaction time. Of course, having 20:10 vision didn't hurt.

Never called into active combat, Williams was discharged in December 1945, and picked up where he left off with the Red Sox in the 1946 season.

Williams was then called from the inactive reserves in 1952 to fight in the Korean War. He arrived in Korea in 1953 as a member of



Special to *The Boot*

**Retired Gen. Raymond G. Davis, the most highly decorated Marine veteran in America, spent 33 years in the Marine Corps.**

the 1st Marine Air Wing. It was there that he began his friendship with former Ohio Senator John Glenn, a fellow Marine pilot.

"By luck of the draw, we went to Korea at the same time," Glenn said. "We were in the same squadron there. What they did at that time, they teamed up a reservist with a regular to fly together most of the time just because the regular Marine pilots normally

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